

**From:** Folake Phillips  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 19, 2023 10:51 AM  
**To:** Laurel Prevetti <[LPrevetti@losgatosca.gov](mailto:LPrevetti@losgatosca.gov)>  
**Cc:** Holly Young <[HYoung@losgatosca.gov](mailto:HYoung@losgatosca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Folake Phillips's Written Comment

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

As a member of the JEDI Community Working Group, I make this written comment with a heightened sense of urgency and gratitude. The process involved in working as a collective, while keeping in mind my sense of duty as a mother and to other children who look like my son is no easy one. Yet, this is a process I would gladly undergo again if called upon.

In these times of growing divisions, I am proud to share that our community working group meetings were the most productive- we navigated complex discussions, didn't always have all the answers, yet, diverse perspectives came together in an admirable and respectful manner. Personally, I honed my civic engagement skills. I felt heard and included. I believe all members experienced growth one way or another. In any case, by and large, we had fantastic moderators help us throughout the process.

The proposed Unity And Solidarity Commission, when established, will signify our community's commitment to embracing change. The Town of Los Gatos is evolving and looks nothing like it was decades ago. This commission will help us forge connections, bridge gaps and begin to learn how inclusive and representative policies with a JEDI lens foster understanding and improved relations for a sustainable community. Isn't this what we all aspire to?

The Town Council included diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in its approved strategic priorities for 2023-25. Today, I am unequivocally stating my support for the Town's JEDI Work Plan which will commence soon. A commission will ensure that these priorities are realized through continuous long-term community input and action. The proposed Unity and Solidarity Commissioned is a historic opportunity to make tangible investments that lead to meaningful change for all. The Town Council has stepped up. It is now necessary to collaborate with, and support The Council's efforts. The creation of a commission will give The Town of Los Gatos the necessary mechanisms to implement the items in the Work Plan.

The proposed Unity and Solidarity Commission will have designated seats for members of key town commissions, businesses, nonprofits, faith leaders, and residents. There will be not one, but two seats for our Youth Commissioners on this commission. Our youth are an underutilized resource, full of energy, ideas, and connections, and they have perhaps the biggest stake in this work. This proposed Unity and Solidarity Commission gives us all the opportunity to bring our youth deeper into the fold and to elevate their voices and ideas. It promises to be a dynamic, thoughtful, and dedicated group of individuals.

I thank the Town Council ahead for approving The Unity and Solidarity Commission. My name is Folake Phillips and I am the Founder & Executive Director of AWO. We are a Los Gatos based social justice nonprofit organization.